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FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

BY ROSE FYLEMAN

VERSE

*Fairies and Chimneys*

*The Fairy Green*

*The Fairy Flute*

TALES

*The Rainbow Cat*



# *Fairies and Chimneys*

BY

ROSE FYLEMAN

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▲

To the *realest* fairy of my childhood

MY MOTHER

▲



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FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS



## FAIRIES

THERE are fairies at the bottom of our garden!

It's not so very, very far away;  
You pass the gardener's shed and you just keep straight  
ahead—

I do so hope they've really come to stay.  
There's a little wood, with moss in it and beetles,  
And a little stream that quietly runs through;  
You wouldn't think they'd dare to come merrymaking  
there—

Well, they do.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!

They often have a dance on summer nights;  
The butterflies and bees make a lovely little breeze,  
And the rabbits stand about and hold the lights.

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

Did you know that they could sit upon the moonbeams  
And pick a little star to make a fan,  
And dance away up there in the middle of the air?  
Well, they can.

There are fairies at the bottom of our garden!  
You cannot think how beautiful they are;  
They all stand up and sing when the Fairy Queen  
and King  
Come gently floating down upon their car.  
The King is very proud and *very* handsome;  
The Queen—now can you guess who that could be  
(She's a little girl all day, but at night she steals  
away)?  
Well—it's ME!

## YESTERDAY IN OXFORD STREET

YESTERDAY in Oxford Street, oh, what d'you think, my  
dears?

I had the most exciting time I've had for years and  
years;

The buildings looked so straight and tall, the sky was  
blue between,

And, riding on a motor-bus, I saw the fairy queen!

Sitting there upon the rail and bobbing up and down,  
The sun was shining on her wings and on her golden  
crown;

And looking at the shops she was, the pretty silks and  
lace—

She seemed to think that Oxford Street was quite a  
lovely place.

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

And once she turned and looked at me, and waved  
her little hand;

But I could only stare and stare—oh, would she understand?

I simply couldn't speak at all, I simply couldn't stir,  
And all the rest of Oxford Street was just a shining  
blur.

Then suddenly she shook her wings—a bird had fluttered by—

And down into the street she looked and up into the  
sky;

And perching on the railing on a tiny fairy toe,  
She flashed away so quickly that I hardly saw her go.

I never saw her any more, altho' I looked all day:  
Perhaps she only came to peep, and never meant to  
stay:

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

But oh, my dears, just think of it, just think what luck  
for me,  
That she should come to Oxford Street, and I be there  
to see!

## A FAIRY WENT A-MARKETING

A FAIRY went a-marketing—  
She bought a little fish;  
She put it in a crystal bowl  
Upon a golden dish.  
An hour she sat in wonderment  
And watched its silver gleam,  
And then she gently took it up  
And slipped it in a stream.

A fairy went a-marketing—  
She bought a coloured bird;  
It sang the sweetest, shrillest song  
That ever she had heard.  
She sat beside its painted cage  
And listened half the day,  
And then she opened wide the door  
And let it fly away.



A fairy went a-marketing—  
She bought a winter gown  
All stitched about with gossamer  
And lined with thistledown.  
She wore it all the afternoon  
With prancing and delight,  
Then gave it to a little frog  
To keep him warm at night.

A fairy went a-marketing—  
She bought a gentle mouse  
To take her tiny messages,  
To keep her tiny house.  
All day she kept its busy feet  
Pit-patting to and fro,  
And then she kissed its silken ears,  
Thanked it, and let it go.

## I STOOD AGAINST THE WINDOW

I stood against the window  
And looked between the bars,  
And there were strings of fairies  
Hanging from the stars;  
Everywhere and everywhere  
In shining, swinging chains;  
The air was full of shimmering,  
Like sunlight when it rains.

They kept on swinging, swinging,  
They flung themselves so high  
They caught upon the pointed moon  
And hung across the sky.  
And when I woke next morning,  
There still were crowds and crowds  
In beautiful bright bunches  
All sleeping on the clouds.

## THE FOUNTAIN

UPON the terrace where I play  
A little fountain sings all day  
    A tiny tune;  
It leaps and prances in the air—  
I saw a little fairy there  
    This afternoon.

The jumping fountain never stops—  
He sat upon the highest drops  
    And bobbed about;  
His legs were waving in the sun,  
He seemed to think it splendid fun—  
    I heard him shout.

The sparrows watched him from a tree,  
A robin bustled up to see  
    Along the path:  
I thought my wishing-bone would break,  
I wished so much that I could take  
    A fairy bath.

A

## THE BEST GAME THE FAIRIES PLAY

THE best game the fairies play,  
The best game of all,  
Is sliding down steeples—  
(You know they're very tall).  
You fly to the weathercock,  
And when you hear it crow  
You fold your wings and clutch your things  
And then let go!

They have a million other games—  
Cloud-catching's one,  
And mud-mixing after rain  
Is heaps and heaps of fun;  
But when you go and stay with them  
Never mind the rest,  
Take my advice—they're very nice,  
But steeple-sliding's best!

## HAVE YOU WATCHED THE FAIRIES?

HAVE you watched the fairies when the rain is done  
Spreading out their little wings to dry them in the  
sun?

I have, I have! Isn't it fun?

Have you heard the fairies all among the limes  
Singing little fairy tunes to little fairy rhymes?  
I have, I have, lots and lots of times!

Have you seen the fairies dancing in the air,  
And dashing off behind the stars to tidy up their hair?  
I have, I have; I've been there!

## THE CHILD NEXT DOOR

THE child next door has a wreath on her hat,  
Her afternoon frock sticks out like that,  
All soft and frilly;  
She doesn't believe in fairies at all  
(She told me over the garden wall)—  
She thinks they're silly.

The child next door has a watch of her own,  
She has shiny hair and her name is Joan  
(Mine's only Mary),  
But doesn't it seem very sad to you  
To think that she never her whole life through  
Has seen a fairy?

## DIFFERENCES

DADDY goes a-riding in a motor painted grey,  
He makes a lot of snorty noise before he gets away;  
The fairies go a-riding when they wish to take their  
    ease,  
The fairies go a-riding on the backs of bumblebees.

Daddy goes a-sailing in a jolly wooden boat,  
He takes a lot of tackle and his very oldest coat;  
The fairies go a-sailing, and I wonder they get home,  
The fairies go a-sailing on a little scrap of foam.

Daddy goes a-climbing with a knapsack and a stick,  
The rocks are very hard and steep, his boots are very  
    thick;

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

But the fairies go a-climbing (I've seen them there in  
crowds),

The fairies go a-climbing on the mountains in the  
clouds.



## MOTHER

WHEN mother comes each morning  
    She wears her oldest things,  
She doesn't make a rustle,  
    She hasn't any rings;  
She says, "Good-morning, chickies,  
    It's such a lovely day,  
Let's go into the garden  
    And have a game of play!"

When mother comes at tea-time  
    Her dress goes shoo-shoo-shoo,  
She always has a little bag,  
    Sometimes a sunshade too;  
She says, "I am so hoping  
    There's something left for me;  
Please hurry up, dear Nanna,  
    I'm dying for my tea."

FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

When mother comes at bed-time  
Her evening dress she wears,  
She tells us each a story  
When we have said our prayers;  
And if there is a party  
She looks so shiny bright  
It's like a lovely fairy  
Dropped in to say good-night.

## GROWN-UPS

AUNTIES know all about fairies,  
Uncles know all about guns,  
Mothers and fathers think all the day long  
Of making their children happy and strong  
Even the littlest ones.

## CAT'S CRADLE

ALTHOUGH it has a jolly name  
Cat's cradle is a funny game—  
I like to play it all the same.

It's easy when you first begin,  
But when it goes all long and thin  
I daren't put my fingers in.

If mother's anywhere about  
We stand against the door and shout  
Until she comes and helps us out.

Her fingers look so long and white,  
Her rings are very sparkly bright,  
She almost always gets it right.

## VISITORS

WHEN I was very ill in bed  
The fairies came to visit me;  
They danced and played around my head,  
Tho' other people couldn't see.

Across the end a railing goes  
With bars and balls and twisted rings,  
And there they juggled on their toes  
And did the wonderfulest things.

They balanced on the golden balls,  
They jumped about from bar to bar,  
And then they fluttered to the walls  
Where coloured birds and flowers are.

I watched them darting in and out,  
I watched them gaily climb and cling,  
While all the flowers moved about  
And all the birds began to sing.

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

And when it was no longer light  
I felt them up my pillows creep,  
And there they sat and sang all night—  
I heard them singing in my sleep.

## WISHES

I wish I liked rice pudding,  
I wish I were a twin,  
I wish some day a real live fairy  
Would just come walking in.

I wish when I'm at table  
My feet would touch the floor,  
I wish our pipes would burst next winter,  
Just like they did next door.

I wish that I could whistle  
Real proper grown-up tunes,  
I wish they'd let me sweep the chimneys  
On rainy afternoons.

I've got such heaps of wishes,  
I've only said a few;  
I wish that I could wake some morning  
And find they'd all come true!

## THE BALLOON MAN

He always comes on market days,  
And holds balloons—a lovely bunch—  
And in the market square he stays,  
And never seems to think of lunch.

They're red and purple, blue and green,  
And when it is a sunny day  
Tho' carts and people get between  
You see them shining far away.

And some are big and some are small,  
All tied together with a string,  
And if there is a wind at all  
They tug and tug like anything.

Some day perhaps he'll let them go  
And we shall see them sailing high,  
And stand and watch them from below—  
They *would* look pretty in the sky!



## I DON'T LIKE BEETLES

I don't like beetles, tho' I'm sure they're very good,  
I don't like porridge, tho' my Nanna says I should;  
I don't like the cistern in the attic where I play,  
And the funny noise the bath makes when the water  
    runs away.

I don't like the feeling when my gloves are made of  
    silk,  
And that dreadful slimy skinny stuff on top of hot  
    milk;  
I don't like tigers, not even in a book,  
And, I know it's very naughty, but I don't like Cook!

## VERY LOVELY

WOULDN'T it be lovely if the rain came down  
Till the water was quite high over all the town?  
If the cabs and buses all were set afloat,  
And we had to go to school in a little boat?

Wouldn't it be lovely if it still should pour  
And we all went up to live on the second floor?  
If we saw the butcher sailing up the hill,  
And we took the letters in at the window sill?

It's been raining, raining, all the afternoon;  
All these things might happen really very soon.  
If we woke to-morrow and found they had begun,  
Wouldn't it be glorious? *Wouldn't* it be fun?

## SUMMER MORNING

THE air around was trembling-bright  
And full of dancing specks of light,  
While butterflies were dancing too  
Between the shining green and blue.  
I might not watch, I might not stay,  
I ran along the meadow way.

The straggling brambles caught my feet,  
The clover field was, oh! so sweet;  
I heard a singing in the sky,  
And busy things went buzzing by;  
And how it came I cannot tell,  
But all the hedges sang as well.

Along the clover-field I ran  
To where the little wood began,

And there I understood at last  
Why I had come so far, so fast—  
On every leaf of every tree  
A fairy sat and smiled at me!

## FAIRY SONG

DANCE, little friend, little friend breeze,  
Low among the hedgerows, high among the trees;  
Fairy partners wait for you, oh, do not miss your  
    chance,

    Dance, little friend, dance!

Sing, little friend, little friend stream,  
Softly through the mossy nooks where fairies lie and  
    dream;

Sweetly by the rushes where fairies sway and swing,  
    Sing, little friend, sing!

Shine, little friend, little friend moon,  
The fairies will have gathered in the forest very soon;  
Send your gleaming silver darts where thick the  
    branches twine,

    Shine, little friend, shine!

## INVITATION

If you will come and stay with us  
You shall not want for ease;  
We'll swing you on a cobweb  
Between the forest trees.  
And twenty little singing birds  
Upon a flowering thorn  
Shall hush you every evening  
And wake you every morn.

If you will come and stay with us  
You need not miss your school,  
A learned toad shall teach you,  
High-perched upon his stool.  
And he will tell you many things  
That none but fairies know—  
The way the wind goes wandering,  
And how the daisies grow.

FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

If you will come and stay with us  
You shall not lack, my dear,  
The finest fairy raiment,  
The best of fairy cheer.  
We'll send a million glow-worms out,  
And slender chains of light  
Shall make a shining pathway—  
Then why not come to-night?

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

You know the smoke from chimneys—  
It often isn't smoke,  
It's nothing but the fairies  
Having such a joke.  
Round they fly and round about,  
Higher still and higher—  
"Dearie me," the people say,  
"A chimney on fire!"

You know the noise the wind makes  
At night-time now and then—  
It's just those naughty fairies  
At their tricks again—  
Sitting in the chimney  
Round and round in rows,  
Singing all together  
And warming up their toes.



## WHITE MAGIC

BLIND folk see the fairies,  
Oh, better far than we,  
Who miss the shining of their wings  
Because our eyes are filled with things  
We do not wish to see.  
They need not seek enchantment  
From solemn, printed books,  
For all about them as they go  
The fairies flutter to and fro  
With smiling, friendly looks.

Deaf folk hear the fairies  
However soft their song;  
'Tis we who lose the honey sound  
Amid the clamour all around  
That beats the whole day long.

But they with gentle faces  
    Sit quietly apart;  
What room have they for sorrowing  
While fairy minstrels sit and sing  
    Close to their listening heart?

A

## THERE USED TO BE—

THERE used to be fairies in Germany—

I know, for I've seen them there  
In a great cool wood where the tall trees stood  
With their heads high up in the air;  
They scrambled about in the forest  
And nobody seemed to mind;  
They were dear little things (tho' they didn't have  
wings)  
And they smiled and their eyes were kind.

What, and oh what were they doing  
To let things like this?  
How could it be? And didn't they see  
That folk were going amiss?  
Were they too busy playing,  
Or can they perhaps have slept,  
That never they heard an ominous word  
That stealthily crept and crept?

## FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

There used to be fairies in Germany—

The children will look for them still;

They will search all about till the sunlight slips out

And the trees stand frowning and chill.

"The flowers," they will say, "have all vanished,

And where can the fairies be fled

That played in the fern?"—The flowers will return,

But I fear that the fairies are dead.

## I F

If I were a bird with a dear little nest  
I should always be going for flights,  
I'd fly to the North and the South and the West  
And see all the wonderful sights.  
I'd perch on the point of the very tall spires,  
And race with the insects and bees,  
And there would be parties on telegraph wires,  
And school at the top of the trees.

If I were a fairy and lived in a flower,  
What fun, oh, what fun it would be!  
I'm certain I never should sleep for an hour,  
And I'd always have honey for tea;  
And never a stocking or shoe would I wear,  
Nor ever a hat on my head,  
And no one would tell me to tidy my hair,  
And no one would send me to bed.

If I were a duchess in satin and pearls,  
I'd curtsey like this and like this;  
I'd graciously smile at the lords and the earls,  
And give them my fingers to kiss.  
And mother should dress all in silver and pink,  
And daddy in silver and green,  
And off we should go in a coach, only think,  
To live with the King and the Queen!

A

## THE FAIRIES HAVE NEVER A PENNY TO SPEND

THE fairies have never a penny to spend,  
They haven't a thing put by,  
But theirs is the dower of bird and of flower  
And theirs are the earth and the sky.  
And though you should live in a palace of gold  
Or sleep in a dried-up ditch,  
You could never be poor as the fairies are,  
And never as rich.

Since ever and ever the world began  
They have danced like a ribbon of flame,  
They have sung their song through the centuries long  
And yet it is never the same.  
And though you be foolish or though you be wise,  
With hair of silver or gold,  
You could never be young as the fairies are,  
And never as old.





BIRD LORE



## PEACOCKS

PEACOCKS sweep the fairies' rooms;  
They use their folded tails for brooms;  
But fairy dust is brighter far  
Than any mortal colours are;  
And all about their tails it clings  
In strange designs of rounds and rings;  
And that is why they strut about  
And proudly spread their feathers out.

## THE CUCKOO

THE cuckoo is a tell-tale,  
A mischief-making bird;  
He flies to East, he flies to West  
And whispers into every nest  
The wicked things he's heard;  
He loves to spread his naughty lies,  
He laughs about it as he flies;  
"Cuckoo," he cries, "cuckoo, cuckoo,  
It's true, it's true."

And when the fairies catch him  
His busy wings they dock,  
They shut him up for evermore  
(He may not go beyond the door)  
Inside a wooden clock;  
Inside a wooden clock he cowers  
And has to tell the proper hours—  
"Cuckoo," he cries, "cuckoo, cuckoo,  
It's true, it's true."

## THE ROOKS

HIGH in the elm-trees sit the rooks,  
Or flit about with busy looks  
    And solemn, ceaseless caws.  
Small wonder they are so intent,  
They are the fairies' Parliament—  
    They make the fairy laws.

They never seem to stop all day,  
And you can hear from far away  
    Their busy chatter-chat.  
They work so very hard indeed  
You'd wonder that the fairies need  
    So many laws as that.

## THE ROBIN

THE robin is the fairies' page;  
They keep him neatly dressed  
For country service or for town  
In dapper livery of brown  
And little scarlet vest.

On busy errands all day long  
He hurries to and fro  
With watchful eyes and nimble wings—  
There are not very many things.  
The robin doesn't know.

And he can tell you, if he will,  
The latest fairy news:  
The quaint adventures of the King,  
And whom the Queen is visiting,  
And where she gets her shoes.

And lately, when the fairy Court  
    Invited me to tea,  
He stood behind the Royal Chair;  
And here, I solemnly declare,  
When he discovered I was there,  
    That robin *winked* at me.

## THE COCK

THE kindly cock is the fairies' friend,  
He warns them when their revels must end;  
He never forgets to give the word,  
For the cock is a thoroughly punctual bird.

And since he grieves that he never can fly,  
Like all the other birds, up in the sky,  
The fairies put him now and again  
High on a church for a weather-vane.

Little for sun or for rain he cares;  
He turns about with the proudest airs  
And chuckles with joy as the clouds go past  
To think he is up in the sky at last.



## THE GROUSE

THE grouse that lives on the moorland wide  
Is filled with a most ridiculous pride;  
He thinks that it all belongs to him  
And every one else must obey his whim.  
When the queer wee folk who live on the moors  
Come joyfully leaping out of their doors  
To frisk about on the warm sweet heather  
Laughing and chattering all together,  
He looks askance at their rollicking play  
And calls to them in the angriest way:  
"You're a feather-brained, foolish, frivolous pack,  
Go back, you rascally imps, go back!"

But little enough they heed his shout;  
Over the rocks they tumble about;  
They chase each other over the ling;  
They kick their heels in the heather and sing;

"Oho, Mr. Grouse, you'd best beware  
Or some fine day, if you don't take care,  
The witch who lives in the big brown bog  
With a wise old weasel, a rat and a frog,  
Will come a-capering over the fell  
And put you under a horrible spell;  
Your feathers will moult and your voice will cra  
Go back, you silly old bird, go back!"

## THE SKYLARK

Of all the birds the fairies love the skylark much the  
best;  
They come with little fairy gifts to seek his hidden  
nest;  
They praise his tiny slender feet and silken suit of  
brown,  
And with their gentle hands they smooth his feathers  
softly down.

They cluster round with glowing cheeks and bright  
expectant eyes,  
Waiting the moment that shall bring the freedom of  
the skies;  
Waiting the double-sweet delight that only he can  
give,  
(Oh, kings might surely spurn their crowns to live as  
fairies live).

FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

To ride upon a skylark's back between his happy  
wings,  
To float upon the edge of heaven and listen while he  
sings—  
The dreams of mortals scarce can touch so perfected  
a bliss,  
And even fairies cannot know a greater joy than this.











